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"As unemployment continues to rise, more and more hard working families are losing their health insurance and are struggling to afford health care coverage for their children," said Congressman Childers. "Because of today's bipartisan legislation, thousands of children in Mississippi will receive the coverage they need."

"My family and I have been in the health care industry for years, and I understand the importance of coverage, especially for our children. Covering more eligible children is not only the right thing to do - it makes good economic sense for taxpayers who will not foot the bill for more costly problems down the road. In addition, a healthy child is better prepared for learning and success.

"I am proud to stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle today in making sure our children are able to get the medical care they deserve.

"I am also pleased that today's legislation is fully paid-for, once again indicating that leadership is listening to calls for responsible spending from me and my colleagues in the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition."

The bipartisan bill both renews and improves SCHIP, preserving coverage for the 7.1 million children currently covered by the program, including 81,565 children in Mississippi, and extending coverage to 4.1 million uninsured children who are eligible for, but not enrolled in, SCHIP and Medicaid.

According to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, more than 133,000 children in Mississippi were uninsured between 2006 and 2007.

During the 110th Congress, the President twice vetoed SCHIP reauthorization despite bipartisan passage in both the House and Senate. As a result of the President's vetoes, Congress was only able to provide a short-term extension of SCHIP through March 2009, but was not able to enact program improvements to help states reach additional uninsured children.

Without today's reauthorization, Mississippi would have no federal SCHIP funds after April 1, 2009 when the program would expire, and the state's projected funding shortfalls for FY 2009 would total \$19 million. However, because of today's SCHIP renewal and extension, Mississippi will be able to both continue covering children already enrolled in the program, and extend coverage to additional low-income children who are currently uninsured.

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